Dear Robert, 1/28/80

Letters lije yours of the 25th mean much to me. I do appreciate them and I thank you sincerely for taking that extra time, along with your expression of disappointment and perhaps frustration.

It is not easy to respond to such letters, not if one is to be honest.

Perfection is not a state of man or of man's government. My recollection of history retrieves no exception.

With this in mind, while I could hardly suggest that you jump for joy, I do suggest that despite the great disappointments and the justifications for them it is not as bleak - comparatively - as it may first appear to be.

The terrible crime and the monstrous official an unofficial failings in its wake are terrible and painful tragedies. Yet the consequences were not all negative. look how many people learned as they otherwise could not have learned of the realities of government and its lackeys. And, of course, if it were not for the hard fight to obtain and release information and the ultimately successful overturning of so much official corruption in one of my earliest suits we'd not have the Freedom of Information Act as we know it, with all that has meant. None of the FBI's and CIA's files, with their incredible disclosures, would have come to pass. I am sure I need not recount the nature of these expsoures to you. Think about them and their significance.

Rather ~~than~~ than curtailing these dishonesties, the executive agencies have invented new and more despicable ones as they carru on as they did before. It is not unlikely that the Act will be severely restricted now, particularly because of the temper of the time. But the good will not be undone and more will yet flow.

I still face these official lies in court, official misleading and misinforming of the courts that is a special subversion and a great danger to the independence of the judiciary. And I still oppose it with all the vigor I can. In the early morning I begin the newest effort. What ever its immediate end it will make a useful, permanent record for the future, however little attention it may now receive.

This is what one must do. Without it we have nothing but Hitlers and Stalins.

It is gratifying that you recall the speech Jim Lesar read for me at NYU. (And don't forget all the unpaid work he has done in these FOIA suits.) It is not gratifying that what followed could be seen and predicted as clearly and accurately. Even to what those identified by name and no less identified if not named would do and the consequences.

It also is not easy in speaking honestly to young adults on the campus, in recounting the unspeakable dishonesties of the government that for good or ill is the teacher of us all, not to dissipirit those young minds. However, what I say is true. There is no country in the world of which I know in which I could have done what I have done.

Even England and Canada have Official Secrets Acts.

So I thank you and I encourage you not to be without hope. We move ever forward, as history shows, even if from time to time we managed to fall backward somewhat.

Oswald in New Orleans is out of print. I did not do the printing so I could not reprint it. However, unless they are all gone, the New York and Brooklyn libraries did have them, I'm pretty sure. Keep looking in the second-hand bookstores. If you find on in time you'll be able to sell it for a considerable amount from the reports reching me.

No complaint about my health. If it is not what I'd like it to be and absent magic will not be I nonetheless make out fairly well. That I tire more easily cannot be entirely attributed to illnes because in 10 weeks I'll be 67. Many of these were hard years, no doubt with tjeir toll. But I am fairly active, still get an early start every day and work with some effeciency and success.

In rewponse to you question about the FOIA work, it takes and wastes an extraordinary amount of time, enough to have precluded further writing. I can't predict how much more I'll be able to get but I can report getting going on a quarter of a million pages of records all of which will now forever be available to the people.

If I do not predict that there will be some major breakthrough, and I certainly predict nothing good for the DJ's coming limited re-investigation, again it is not hopeless unless one hopes for the completely impossible.

Young people should always hope and strive for the impossible and never believe that anything is impossible because in the end nothing is. It may be impossible for one's lifetime but that does not mean forever and younger people have longer in which to see the impossible become the reality.

We have not solved the JFK assassination but is it not worth the effort that despite all the official so-called investigations and all the power and influence behind them so many people have come to understand that those they trusted were unworthy of trust and henceforth can benefit from this knowledge?

Please excuse the typos. It is bedtime and I'm tired. Good luck in your own work, and don't underestimate the value of bringing joy to anyone, no matter how transitory that joy may be.

Sincerely,